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THE AUTHORSHIP OF "THE FLOWER  
AND THE LEAF."

ALTHOUGH *The Flower and the Leaf*<sup>1</sup> has been for some years excluded from the Chaucer canon,<sup>2</sup> no one but Professor Skeat has thus far hazarded a guess as to its true authorship. He thinks that *The Flower and the Leaf* and *The Assembly of Ladies*,<sup>3</sup> in both of which the author, writing in the first person, is addressed as a woman, may very probably be by the same person who wrote certain *Verses by a Lady*, printed in *The Paston Letters*.<sup>4</sup> This lady is conjectured<sup>5</sup> to have been the Countess of Oxford, youngest daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the celebrated 'King-maker;' and her *Verses* are assigned to about 1471.

That the Countess of Oxford may have written *The Assembly of Ladies* seems not inherently improbable, for all recent criticism has assigned that poem to a time rather late in the fifteenth century; but according to Professor Skeat's own chronology there is serious difficulty about making her the author of *The Flower and the Leaf*. Her husband was not born till 1442. She 'may have been as old' as he (to quote from Professor Skeat), but was probably no older. Her eldest brother—she was sixth and youngest in the family—was born in 1428. Accordingly she can hardly have been old enough to write *The Flower and the Leaf* till about 1460, and it is unlikely that she

<sup>1</sup> Skeat, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 361-79.

<sup>2</sup> See ten Brink, *Chaucer Studien* (1870), pp. 156 ff.; Skeat, Introduction to Bell's Chaucer (1878), and *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. lxii ff.; Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer* (1892), Vol. I, pp. 489 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 380 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Gairdner (Birmingham, 1875), Vol. III, p. 302.

<sup>5</sup> *Modern Language Quarterly*, Vol. III, p. 111 (December, 1900).

was old enough even then. This poem, however, in its use of the final *e* and other peculiarities of language, seems to be of the first rather than the second half of the century, and considerably earlier than *The Assembly of Ladies*.<sup>1</sup> Hence the chronological situation is as follows: According to Professor Skeat the poem of *The Paston Letters*, written about 1471, is later than *The Assembly of Ladies*; according to him also *The Assembly of Ladies* is considerably later than *The Flower and the Leaf*; <sup>2</sup> yet all three, with all their differences of language and metre, must have been written between 1460 and 1471. This was the period of the Wars of the Roses, when—still according to Professor Skeat—‘the composition of these poems was hardly possible.’ <sup>3</sup>

This striking chronological inconsistency of course does not positively disprove the theory, because the dates of the poems are all conjectural; but there are other objections. Except in the commonplaces of Chaucerian imitation, there is no similarity in the poems thus attributed to the same person; but decided dissimilarity in language, in spirit, and especially in poetical quality. The hint that authorship by Margaret Neville accounts for the references to the daisy (*marguerite*) in both *F. L.* and *A. L.*<sup>4</sup> is hardly worth consideration in view of the well-known cult of that flower by Machaut, Froissart, Deschamps, Chaucer, and others.<sup>5</sup> And especially does it seem improbable that a poet whose name was Margaret would treat the worshippers of the ‘margaret-flower’ as our author treats them.<sup>6</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> I have noted in Lydgate, who died about 1451, and in *The King's Quair*, apparent allusions to *The Flower and the Leaf*. See my article on *Sources and Analogues of 'The Flower and the Leaf,'* in *Modern Philology*, Vol. iv, pp. 159, 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. lxvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxx.

<sup>4</sup> Hereafter, for convenience, *The Flower and the Leaf* and *The Assembly of Ladies*, respectively, will be referred to by these abbreviations.

<sup>5</sup> Discussed in my article previously mentioned, *Modern Philology*, Vol. iv, pp. 157–60, and in places there cited.

<sup>6</sup> As pointed out by Professor Hales in the *Athenæum*, March 28, 1903.

whole, authorship by the Countess of Oxford may be dismissed as a not very plausible guess.

Professor Skeat's more serious contention that *F. L.* and *A. L.* are by the same person—the same woman—requires more detailed examination. It depends fundamentally upon the assumption that because the author purports to have been a woman, woman she must have been. Insistence upon this point implies not only that no man would have used so simple a device as concealment of sex; but also, in case the poem is a translation or adaptation from the French, that no English man would have translated a French woman's poem. As a matter of fact concealment of sex is not unknown in fourteenth and fifteenth century literature. Deschamps wrote several poems purporting to be by women,<sup>1</sup> and Christine de Pisan several purporting to be by men.<sup>2</sup> Lydgate, too, is credited with 'a balade sayde by a gentillwoman which loued a man of gret estate.'<sup>3</sup> Proceeding on the assumption, however, that *F. L.* and *A. L.* must be by women, Professor Skeat goes summarily to the conclusion that both are by the same woman.<sup>4</sup>

(1) 'The first point,' he says, 'is that (with the sole exception of the Nutbrown Maid) no English poems exist, . . . written previously to 1500, and purporting to be written by a woman.'<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the argument seems to run, these two poems which do purport to be by women, must be both by the same woman; because no two women in England in the fifteenth century could have written poetry. It would seem more reasonable to say that because Professor Skeat finds no record of early Eng-

<sup>1</sup> As noted by Professor Kittredge in *Modern Philology*, Vol. I, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> E. g., the 'Complaintes Amoureuses' in *Oeuvres Poétiques*, ed. Roy; Société des Anciens Textes Français, Vol. I, pp. 281 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1854-1875, Vol. II, p. 699. The editor of *The Paston Letters* suggests that the *Verses* mentioned above may have been written by Lydgate.

<sup>4</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, Introduction, pp. lxiii ff.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted by the way that *The Nutbrown Maid* does not purport to be by a woman, but by a man. See line 3 of the last stanza.

lish women poets,<sup>1</sup> therefore these poems were not by women at all.

(2) In *A. L.* all the characters, except the gentleman to whom the author's dream is told, are ladies; in *F. L.* 'the principal characters are ladies and the chief personages are queens.' It is difficult to see what force can reasonably be attached to this coincidence. Men have certainly been known in all ages to make women prominent in their poetry. The fact that Eustache Deschamps mentions the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf as orders particularly of women<sup>2</sup> abundantly accounts for the importance of the sex in *F. L.* And if it should be said that for this reason a woman is more likely to have written about the orders, the only answer needed is that all the other known references to them are by men—Chaucer, Deschamps, and Charles d'Orleans.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the resemblance in this respect, which Professor Skeat sees between the two poems compared, is not readily apparent. In *A. L.* no men play a direct part. In *F. L.* there are elaborate jousts by a 'rout' of 'men at armes,' including the most famous heroes of romance and history; and the number of knights and ladies in both companies appears to be equal.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it can not be said that women are more prominent than men in *F. L.* except as the 'chief personages are queens.' And it is difficult to see how a mediæval poet of either sex could naturally have made anyone but Flora leader of a company of worshippers of the Flower; or why the choice of Diana as leader of a company of brave men and chaste women (especially in view of the inevita-

<sup>1</sup> However, Marie de France lived and wrote in England, though not in English, long before the fifteenth century; and Professor Manly tells me that he has a record of payment for a play made to a woman during the fifteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> *Oeuvres Complètes*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, Vol. iv, p. 259. Deschamps gives the names of men who apparently belonged to the orders, however.

<sup>3</sup> Chaucer, Prologue to *Legende of Good Women*; Deschamps, *Oeuvres*, Vol. iv, pp. 257 ff.; d'Orleans, *Poésies*, ed. d'Héricault, Vol. i, pp. 79 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *F. L.*, ll. 196, 504-25, 322, 326.

ble feminine leadership of the contrasted company) should be of any value whatever as evidence of feminine authorship. As well argue that a woman must have written *The Legende of Good Women*.

(3) ‘But,’ says Professor Skeat, ‘the most characteristic thing is the continual reference to colours, dresses, ornaments, and decorations;’ the implication being that only a woman would have been likely to write about such things. As a matter of fact, ‘continual’ is too strong a word. When the adherents of the Leaf are introduced, there is a rather elaborate description of their appearance and attire; and again when the adherents of the Flower appear, a much briefer description.<sup>1</sup> But these are the only passages of the kind, and mediæval poetry known to be by men is full of such passages.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in the portion about the followers of the Leaf, much the greater amount of space (approximately nine and a half stanzas to three and a half) is given to such masculine appurtenances as ‘scochones,’ ‘hors-harneys,’ armor, and so forth. Hence if we must assume that only a woman would have written of ‘seams and collars and sleeves,’ must we not also assume that only a man would have shown detailed knowledge of the trappings of a knight and his horse?

(4) As to the verbal resemblances which Professor Skeat points out between *F. L.* and *A. L.*,<sup>3</sup> all may be accounted for by use of the common stock of imitators of Chaucer. All of the words, phrases, and short passages in *F. L.* which he compares with similar passages in *A. L.* may be found in works of Chaucer or Lydgate or others of the Chaucerian school; usually not once only but over and over again. I have made a list of

<sup>1</sup> *F. L.*, ll. 141 ff.; 327 ff.

<sup>2</sup> E. g., *The Romaunt of the Rose*, Chaucerian version, ll. 562–79, 888–908, 1071–1128, etc.; Lydgate’s *Reson and Sensuallyte*, ed. Sieper (*Early English Text Society*, 1901–3), ll. 347 ff., 1147 ff., 1392 ff., 1555 ff., 1724 ff., 2810 ff., 5337 ff., etc.

<sup>3</sup> Not only in his Introduction, but also in his notes on both poems—*Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 529–38.

such passages, too long for publication; but persons familiar with Chaucerian English will hardly need it.<sup>1</sup>

(5) Proceeding with Professor Skeat's general argument, we come to the following: 'Very characteristic of female authorship is the remark that the ladies vied with each other as to which looked the best; a remark which occurs in both poems; see *F. L.* 188, *A.* 384.' Unfortunately this is not an accurate statement of the meaning of the passage in *F. L.*, as a careful reading of ll. 187-89 will at once show. There is no suggestion that the women of the company of the Leaf were consciously vying with one another; the author merely says that in her 'herber' she was well situated for looking at them carefully and deciding for herself 'who fairest was.'<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, in *A. L.*, ll. 383-85, the company of ladies, of whom the author was a member, laid wagers among themselves as to

Which of us was atyred goodliest,  
And of us al which shuld be prayssed best.<sup>3</sup>

Surely observations so essentially different as these might have been made by different persons; and neither is quite beyond the reach of the masculine intellect.

(6). The resemblances in plan and structure upon which Professor Skeat comments are as truly parts of the common poetical material of the time as the phrases already discussed under (4). Opening with a description of nature is perfectly conventional; and there are many poems which in this regard resemble *F. L.* much more closely than does *A. L.*, because in

<sup>1</sup> A conclusion similar to mine is stated, without argument, by Dr. W. A. Neilson, in his study of *The Origins and Sources of The Court of Love*; *Harvard Studies*, Vol. VI, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> This passage in *F. L.* far more closely resembles Chaucer's remark in the *Knight's Tale*, *A.*, ll. 2201-2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lydgate's *Reson and Sensualyte*, ll. 1945-46, in which Mercury, telling about the strife of the goddesses for the golden apple, says they contended as to

Who fairest was, and did excelle  
Of beaute for to bere the belle.

the latter the natural setting is not the usual one of spring. I have gone into this matter in some detail elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and need only repeat here that, if such matters as the ‘world of ladies,’ the ‘abundance of dresses, and gems, and bright colours,’ the manner of explanation of the allegory, furnish evidence of common authorship of *F. L.* and *A. L.*, a large part of the French and English poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries must also have been by the same person.

On the whole the differences between *F. L.* and *A. L.* seem more notable than the resemblances. Professor Skeat himself mentions the much more frequent occurrence of the feminine *e* in *F. L.* Professor Neilson notes ‘the frequency of run-on stanzas in the *Flower and the Leaf*, and the absence of them in the *Assembly*,’ and comments on the decidedly different movement of the two poems.<sup>2</sup> Professor Skeat admits that *A. L.* is ‘longer and duller,’ but at once qualifies the admission in a way difficult to understand; for it is safe to say that most readers have found the two poems almost at opposite poles in interest and charm. Both consist largely of conventional material; both are allegorical, though in widely different ways; both are in language and metre imitative of Chaucer. But in *F. L.* the diction is picturesque, the action moves briskly, the central idea is brought out pointedly, and all the details are in harmony. On the other hand, *A. L.* abounds to an exceptional degree in repetitions, circumlocutions, ‘tags,’ unidiomatic English, and the clumsiest devices to secure rime; what little action it presents is dull and trivial; and the central idea is so far from clear that Professor Skeat himself has singularly misinterpreted it.<sup>3</sup> Especially in relation to the allegory are the

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Philology*, Vol. iv, pp. 281 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Harvard Studies*, Vol. vi, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> He says (*Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. lxx), ‘A considerable part . . . may have been much appreciated at the time, as having reference to the ordering of a large mediæval household.’ The foundation for this remark is the fact that various ladies are respectively the porter, usher, steward, chamberlain, etc., in the house of Loyalty; but any reference to the ‘ordering of a



differences between *F. L.* and *A. L.* noticeable. In the former the companies of knights and ladies are introduced as real people. There is hardly a hint of allegory till the explanation is given near the end, and even then the characters receive no abstract names. But in *A. L.* we have from the beginning a host of such lifeless personifications as developed in the wake of the *Roman de la Rose* after the original inspiration had spent itself. *F. L.* belongs with *The Parlement of Foules* or the Prologue to *The Legende of Good Women*; it has interest apart from its allegory. *A. L.* is nothing without its didacticism and its allegory.

The conclusion, then, as to Professor Skeat's whole theory of authorship is that it is not only unproved but unlikely. The author of *F. L.* may have been a woman; but was probably not the same person as the author of *A. L.* And it should not be assumed on the present evidence that the author was a woman at all. The style and subject matter of *F. L.* present closer resemblances to undisputed work of John Lydgate than to that of any other known English author, even Chaucer.

The resemblances of *F. L.* to the work of Lydgate are of many kinds. To treat formal matters first, it is in Lydgate's favorite stanza, the so called 'rhyme royal,' and has in a marked degree the peculiarities that have been noted in Lydgate's use of the five-stress line.<sup>1</sup> Of the five types of lines described by Professor Schick, we may take no account of A and B, since these are not peculiar to Lydgate and B is rare in our poem.

Type C, however, deserves close attention. This is the 'peculiarly Lydgatian type,' says Professor Schick, 'in which

large mediæval household' is purely incidental, and apart from the purpose of the poem. Such allegorical household officers are met with regularly in poems of the Court of Love group, to which *A. L.* clearly belongs. It is not a treatise on housekeeping, but a Court of Love allegory. See in this connection Dr. Neilson's dissertation, chap. iii, *passim*; *Harvard Studies*, Vol. vi.

<sup>1</sup> This discussion of metre is based mainly on Schick's chapter on Lydgate's metre in his Introduction to *The Temple of Glas*, E. E. T. S., 1891; pp. liv ff.

the thesis is wanting in the caesura, so that two accented syllables clash together,’ near the middle of the line. Line 5 :

‘Causing the gróund, féle týmes and óft,’

is an example of this type, which is frequent in *F. L.*, as the following list will show : ll. 5, 15(?), 20, 55, 172, 218, 222, 239, 242, 259, 268, 277(?), 300, 312, 421(?), 492. Many more lines besides these may be taken as of type C if Professor Skeat’s emendations, made to normalize the grammar or the metre, are disregarded. Thus line 14 :

‘Of this sesoún wéxeth [ful] glád and líght.’

may be scanned without ‘ful’ as a Lydgatian line of type C. ‘Ful’ is not needed for the sense, is not in the earliest text we have of the poem, and is not needed for the metre. Lines similar to this are : 50, 66, 75, 103, 116, 131, 175, 235, 425, 438, 494, 505, 542, 555, 562. It is not contended that in all these cases the emendations are undesirable, for they sometimes improve the lines ; but they are in the great majority of cases needless.

The foregoing figures indicate that this ‘peculiarly Lydgatian type’ of line occurs at least as frequently in *F. L.* as Professor Schick finds it in *The Temple of Glas*. It is found very rarely in Chaucer,<sup>1</sup> or in the poems by other writers than Lydgate in Skeat’s *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*. It occurs rather frequently in the pieces by Lydgate in the volume just named : in *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, ll. 35, 50, 67, 76, 100, etc. ; *The Flour of Curtesye*, ll. 1, 22, 34, 44, 50, 54, 62, 63, etc. ; *To My Sovereign Lady*, ll. 4, 63, etc.

Type D, ‘the acephalous or headless line, in which the first syllable has been cut off,’ is very common in *F. L.* Though Professor Schick does not find many such lines in *The Temple of Glas*, Professor Sieper has pointed out that they are very common in *Reson and Sensuallyte*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Skeat’s Oxford Chaucer, Vol. vi, Introduction, p. xcii.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. ii of his ed., pp. 11, 12.

Lines of type E, 'with trissyllabic first measure,' are rare in *F. L.*, and unimportant as not peculiarly Lydgatian.

Rough lines, not belonging clearly to any of the above types, are very numerous in *F. L.* Doubtless this is partly because of the many imperfections of the text, our earliest source for which, Speght's Chaucer of 1598, is apparently much modernized. Professor Skeat has made an effort to restore the probable original; but as we have seen, he has sometimes emended unnecessarily, while at the same time he has been forced to leave numerous unmetrical lines. Such are, for example, 126, 177, 178, 186, 195, 220, 229, 252, 272, 299, 325, 334, 352, 376, 397, 402, 404, 410, 430, 589, 593. It must be admitted that these lines show a lack of sensitiveness to rhythm such as Professor Schick finds frequently in the work of Lydgate.

As to rime, the characteristics on which Professor Schick comments<sup>1</sup> are found in *F. L.* Differences in the quality of the rime vowel are not regarded; e. g., in ll. 37-42, 198-201, 212-15, 328-29, 405-06, 590-93. No difference is made between *ei* and *ai* in ll. 421-23. Cheap rimes are frequent, especially of adverbs in *ly* and verb forms in *ing*: e. g., ll. 128-30, 156-59, etc.; 141-43, 251-52, etc. We also find *ese* rimed with *disese*, ll. 20-21, 377-78; *quantitee* with *plentee*, 76-77; *plesyr* with *desyr*, 113-15; *echoon* with *oon*, 142-44, 468-69; *cereal* with *al*, 209-10; *ware* with *were*, 261-63; *indede* with *dede*, 480-81; *notable* with *Table*, 513-15; *rede* (verb) with *rede* (adj.), 590-93. There are also in *F. L.*, as in Lydgate, rimes in which the final *e* is disregarded, as follows: ll. 27-28, 114-16-17, 163-65-66, 205-7-8, 212-14-15, 247-49-50, 387-89-90, 398-99. It should be particularly noted that probably the most important of these irregularities in *F. L.*,—the rimes of *passe* and *was*, ll. 27-8, 114-16; and of *compas*, *pace*, and *face*, 163-65-66,—have an exact counterpart among the examples given by Professor Schick on p. lxii. Still other rimes are of

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to *Temple of Glas*, pp. lx ff.

this type in Speght's edition of *F. L.*, but have been normalized by Professor Skeat's changes in spelling; as follows: ll. 1-3, 78-80, 85-87-89, 191-93-94, 219-21-22, 583-85-86. Among these latter are rimes of *y* and *ie* such as are found in Lydgate.

Last but not least of metrical points is the fact that run-on stanzas, such as are very numerous in *F. L.*, are frequently found in Lydgate's work, and rarely in that of Chaucer and of Lydgate's contemporaries. The following table will bring out the facts clearly:

*F. L.*, . . . . . 85 stanzas, 31 run-on.

Poems by Lydgate:

*B. K.*,<sup>1</sup> . . . . . 97 stanzas, 19 run-on.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations of titles will be used hereafter:

*A. G.*—*The Assembly of Gods*, ed. Triggs (E. E. T. S., 1895). Attributed to Lydgate, but L.'s authorship is questioned by Sieper; *R. S.*, Vol. II, Preface, p. vi.

*B. D.*—Chaucer's *Boke of the Duchess*. Chaucer references are to Skeat's Oxford ed.

*B. K.*—Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight; Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 245 ff.

*C. B.*—Lydgate's *Chorl and the Bird; M. P.*, pp. 179 ff.

*F. C.*—Lydgate's *Flour of Curtesye; Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 266 ff.

*Isopus*—Lydgate's translations from Aesop: I, ed. Sauerstein, *Anglia*, Vol. IX, pp. 1 ff.; II, ed. Zupitza, *Herrig's Archiv*, Vol. 85, pp. 1 ff.

*L. G. W.*—Chaucer's *Legende of Good Women*.

*M. P.*—Lydgate's *Minor Poems*, ed. Halliwell (Percy Society, Vol. II, 1840).

*Night.*—Lydgate's *Two Nightingale Poems*, ed. Glauning (E. E. T. S., 1900); referred to as I and II respectively.

*Pil.*—Lydgate's *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (translation from de Guilleville), ed. Furnivall (E. E. T. S., 1899, 1901).

*R. R.*—*Le Roman de la Rose*. References are to the Chaucerian version.

*R. S.*—Lydgate's *Reson and Sensuallyte*.

*Secrees*—Lydgate and Burgh's *Secrees of Philosophers*, ed. Steele (E. E. T. S., 1894).

*T. G.*—Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*.

*Thebes*—Lydgate's *Story of Thebes*. References are to the reprint in Chalmers' *English Poets*, Vol. I, pp. 570 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Part of this is a lyrical "compleynt," less loose in structure than a poem mainly narrative or descriptive.

<i>F. C.</i> , . . . . .	39 stanzas,	5 run-on.
<i>T. G.</i> , . . . . .	119 “	16 “ <sup>1</sup>
<i>Night. I.</i> , . . . . .	59 “	13 “
<i>Night. II.</i> , . . . . .	54 “	9 “

Poems not by Lydgate in *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*:

Hoccleve's <i>Letter of Cupid</i> , . .	No run-on stanzas.
<i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i> , . .	108 stanzas, 4 run-on. <sup>2</sup>
Henryson's <i>Testament of Cressid</i> , . . . . .	88 “ 2 “
<i>The Cuckoo and the Nightingale</i> , . . . . .	58 “ 2 “
<i>A. L.</i> , . . . . .	108 “ 4 “
Gower's <i>Praise of Peace</i> , . . . . .	No run-on stanzas.

Thus run-on stanzas are frequent, among Chaucerian imitations, only in *F. L.*, in works of Lydgate, and in *The Court of Love*, which is late and probably influenced by Lydgate.<sup>3</sup>

The language of Lydgate, in its grammatical aspects, is not sufficiently different from that of Chaucer to furnish solid ground for argument. It may be said, however, that *F. L.* resembles Lydgate's work in the usual but not universal use of the final *e*.<sup>4</sup> Professor Skeat himself points out that the use, in *F. L.*, of *very* with adjectives is like Lydgate and not like Chaucer.<sup>5</sup> I may also add that the insertion of 'scraps of French,' on which Professor Skeat comments in his comparison of *F. L.* and *A. L.*, is found in Lydgate frequently; e. g., in the poems numbered *xi* and *xxii* in *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*.

In the matter of style, it must be admitted at the outset that *F. L.* is more attractive to present-day readers than most of Lydgate's work. Yet it will be found that his main characteristics are here. Professor Schick pronounces his work 'drawled out and incompact.' 'His sentences run on aimlessly, without

<sup>1</sup> The stanzaic part here is largely lyric.

<sup>2</sup> The run-on stanzas occur in the translator's portion of the poem, which is doubtless late enough to have been influenced by Lydgate.

<sup>3</sup> As shown by Neilson, *Harvard Studies*, Vol. vi, chap. vii.

<sup>4</sup> See Schick's Introduction, pp. lxxiii ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. lxxv.

definite stop, and it is often difficult to say where a particular idea begins or ends.'<sup>1</sup> This description applies very well to the structure of at least the following portions of *F. L.*: ll. 1-14, 15-21, 22-36, 64-77, 92-105, 113-26, 141-63, 190-203, 218-30, 239-63, 274-87, 302-13, 323-33, 360-71, 427-41, 547-57. Some of these sentences are so involved as to seem incapable of grammatical analysis, and may therefore be classed with the anacolutha found frequently in Lydgate's work; especially ll. 51-3, 89-91, 151-3, 214-15, 222-3, 521-3, 530-32, 554, 558-65.

The 'long sermons and moralizations' in which Lydgate delights are represented in *F. L.* by the elaborate explanation of the allegory in ll. 467-581.

Such incongruous mixture of ideas and persons of different ages of the world as Professor Schick discusses is not so much characteristic of Lydgate as of mediæval literature in general. It is found in *F. L.*, to a degree, in the association of the Nine Worthies, the Knights of the Round Table, the *Douze Pairs*, the Knights of the Garter, and women of all ages, under the leadership of Flora and Diana.

The use of 'expletives, pleonasms and certain stock phrases' is also characteristic of Middle English poetry in general. Such expressions are frequent in Lydgate and in *F. L.*, as indeed in Chaucer, but not so frequent as in later poems of less inspiration, such as *A. L.*

'The effort after parallelism of expression,' which Professor Sieper finds very prominent in Lydgate's work,<sup>2</sup> is plainly apparent in *F. L.* A few examples from the opening stanzas will illustrate the point: 'fele tymes and oft,' l. 5; 'feld and mede,' 9; 'good and hoolsom,' 10; 'old and deede,' 11; 'glad and light,' 14; 'siknesse nor disese,' 21; 'my gere and myn array,' 26; etc.

<sup>1</sup> See *T. G.*, pp. cxxxiv ff. Probably the run-on stanzas noted above are largely to be accounted for by this loose, wandering structure.

<sup>2</sup> *R. S.*, Vol. II, pp. vi, 2, 6, 45 ff.

Other peculiarities of Lydgate, discussed by Professor Schick under the head of style,<sup>1</sup> will be treated below in connection with resemblances of the subject matter of *F. L.* to the work of Lydgate. These are chiefly his love of allegory, his familiarity with the Court of Love idea, and his apologetic vein. The Lydgatian peculiarities pointed out by Dr. Glauning<sup>2</sup> will also be discussed below.

In the consideration of subject matter, it is desirable to examine in some detail the principal elements of our poem. This can be done rapidly, however, owing to my discussion of these elements in the paper already mentioned.<sup>3</sup> Many of the elements are conventional, and therefore separately of no great value; but taken altogether they are surely of significance, especially because of the numerous cases in which the phrasing as well as the thought of *F. L.* resembles Lydgate. The similarities to be pointed out below are not merely verbal, like most of those which Professor Skeat has been criticized for over-emphasizing;<sup>4</sup> they are similarities in both thought and expression.<sup>5</sup>

The specific details of the astronomical reference at the beginning of *F. L.* find their closest parallel in Lydgate's *B. K.*<sup>6</sup> Descriptions of spring are common in Lydgate, several presenting in similar terms practically all the points dwelt upon in *F. L.* The most elaborate is in *R. S.*<sup>7</sup> In Lydgate's *Testament*,<sup>8</sup> also, the 'bareyn soil' is clothed with 'newe lyveree,' flowers

<sup>1</sup> *T. G.*, pp. cxxxviii-xlii.

<sup>2</sup> *Night.*, pp. xxxv-vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Modern Philology*, Vol. iv, pp. 121 ff., 281 ff. To be referred to hereafter simply as *Sources*. I shall as completely as possible avoid repetition of matter therein contained.

<sup>4</sup> P. 377 above.

<sup>5</sup> Of course it must be continually borne in mind that *F. L.*, like nearly all of Lydgate's work, is a conscious imitation of Chaucer.

<sup>6</sup> *Sources*, p. 282. Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 1-3, 7-9, 534; with *B. K.*, ll. 1-4, 595.

<sup>7</sup> *Sources*, p. 310. Cf. *R. S.*, ll. 96 ff.; with *F. L.*, ll. 4-14. The phrase at the end of l. 14—'glad and light'—seems to have been a favorite one with Lydgate. I find it in *M. P.*, pp. 4, 217; *T. G.*, l. 1216; *Thebes*, pp. 571, 582, 586.

<sup>8</sup> *M. P.*, pp. 242 ff.

spring up, birds sing, there are 'holsom shoures,' it is the season of joy.<sup>1</sup> In *Pil.*<sup>2</sup> Nature tells the poet how she renews the earth's beauties year after year, clothing with buds all

Wych, with wynter, dede I made.<sup>3</sup>

Like other mediæval writers of love allegories with the spring-time setting, Lydgate often represents himself as sleepless;<sup>4</sup> and as rising before dawn, or about dawn, and going into a pleasant grove or meadow. Thus in *F. C.* (ll. 34, 35) he goes to a grove to see the birds choose their mates; in *B. K.* he goes

Into the wode, to here the briddes singe.<sup>5</sup> (l. 23)

In *R. S.* there is a forest with a regularity of arrangement resembling that described in *F. L.*—a regularity found also earlier in *R. R.* and in *B. D.*<sup>6</sup> The 'path of litel brede,' 'forgrowen . . . with gras and weede,' which the poet finds in *F. L.*, resembles the 'litel wey' of *B. K.*, which leads

Toward a park, enclosed with a wal  
In compas rounde,

like the 'herber' enclosed by a 'hegge . . . that yede [as] in compas,' of our poem.<sup>7</sup> A similar arbor, in both *C. B.* and

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 6, 10. 'Holsom aire' and 'holsom shoures' are frequently mentioned by Lydgate. See *M. P.*, p. 244; *Thebes*, pp. 579, 588, 594.

<sup>2</sup>Ll. 3468 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 11-12. Further specific resemblances to *F. L.* will be found in *B. K.* and at the beginning of the Prologue to *Thebes*. See *Sources*, pp. 307-9.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 17-21; with *T. G.*, l. 12; *R. S.*, ll. 194 ff.; *Night*, I, l. 44; *B. K.*, ll. 15 ff. Glauning, in his Introduction to *Night*, p. xxxv, mentions 'the sleepy poet' (apparently an error for 'sleepless') among 'points . . . common in Lydgate's works.'

<sup>5</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 27, 37. Cf. also *F. L.*, ll. 36-38, with *C. B.*, p. 181:

[The bird] with hir song made hevy hertes lighte  
That to beholde it was an heavenly sighte.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 29-31, with *R. S.*, ll. 2730-32, 2767-68; *R. R.*, ll. 1391 ff.; *B. D.*, ll. 419 ff. See *Sources*, pp. 286, 300, 311, 320.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 43-45, 49-55; with *B. K.*, ll. 38-40.



*B. K.*, is said to be 'benched;' in *C. B.* 'benched with turves,' as in *F. L.* and in Chaucer's Prologue to *L. G. W.*<sup>1</sup> The attribution of healing powers to the odor of the eglantine in *F. L.*—a common device—in manner of expression strikingly resembles the following lines from *R. S.* :

That ther nys hert, I dar expresse,      (l. 5607)  
Oppressed so with hevynesse,  
Nor in sorwe so y-bounde,  
That he sholde ther ha founde  
Comfort hys sorowe to apese  
To a-sette her hert at ese.<sup>2</sup>

The description of the nightingale's song in *F. L.* (ll. 99–105), though in part conventional, bears particular resemblance to *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* (ll. 98–100),<sup>3</sup> and to various passages from Lydgate. Thus in *Night. I* (ll. 82–84) her notes rang 'thorgh-oute the wode,'

so merily ande so shryll,  
The wych enchesoned me tabide there styll.

In *B. K.* the birds

So loude songe, that al the wode rong;      (l. 45)

and the nightingale

With so gret mighte her voys gan out-wreste  
Right as her herte fot love wolde breste.<sup>4</sup>

The use of 'ravished' as in *F. L.* (ll. 103, 114) is very common in Lydgate, several times in passages similar to these. In *Night. I* 'thys blessed bred' 'thorghly my hert raueshed had and persed' (l. 52). In *R. S.* (ll. 203, 204), 'I was ravysshed, as thoughte me,' to hear the birds.<sup>5</sup> The description of the

<sup>1</sup> *L. G. W.*, B, ll. 203–4; *C. B.*, p. 181; *B. K.*, ll. 125–26.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 79–84; also *B. K.*, ll. 99–105.

<sup>3</sup> A poem to which the author of *F. L.* appears to allude in ll. 39–42, and Lydgate in *M. P.*, pp. 23, 119, 205.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also *M. P.*, p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> See also *R. S.*, ll. 3656, 3839, 5094; *T. G.*, l. 16. In this connection also *F. L.*, l. 447, may be compared with *Night. II*, l. 73, and with *C. B.*, bottom of p. 181.

voices heard from the arbor in *F. L.* (ll. 128–33) is very closely paralleled in *R. S.* (ll. 5202–20), especially in the use of the words 'melodious acorde,' 'soote armonye,' 'aungelyke,' and in the thought that no man ever heard such melody. The comparison with angels and the word 'armonye' seem to have been favorites of Lydgate.<sup>1</sup>

The vision of a company of people similar in a general way to the adherents of the Leaf and of the Flower is very common, especially in poems connected in any way with the Court of Love idea. The most influential poem of this type was *R. R.*, of which one of the best imitations, *Les Echees Amoureux*, was the original of Lydgate's *R. S.* The description in the latter poem of a company of lovers in the garden of Deduit and Cupid presents numerous striking points of resemblance to *F. L.*<sup>2</sup>

The costumes of the company of the Leaf are richly adorned with precious stones, a fact which Professor Skeat emphasizes because of similar details in *A. L.* The closest parallels, however, are between *F. L.* and passages from Chaucer and Lydgate. As Schick and Glauning have noted,<sup>3</sup> the latter seems to have been a notable lover of precious stones. From a long list of references I suggest special comparison of *F. L.* 148, with *R. S.* 2848; *F. L.* 153, with *R. S.* 1400; *F. L.* 149–50 with *C. B.*, p. 188; and *F. L.* 149, 224, with *Isopus* I, p. 1.<sup>4</sup> The description of the costumes in general is more than matched in Lydgate's *Pur le Roy* (*M. P.*, pp. 2 ff.), and especially in the description of the appearance and clothing of the chief personages in *R. S.*<sup>5</sup> Diana's clothing is particularly worth notice because of her leadership of the company of the Leaf. She

<sup>1</sup> See *M. P.*, pp. 8, 10, 11, 182, 246, etc.; *T. G.*, ll. 269 (and notes thereon), 581, 1304, 1363, p. 62; *R. S.*, ll. 161, 277, 1765, 3637, 5215; *Night*, II, ll. 5, 357; *Thebes*, pp. 572, 577, 601; *Secrees*, l. 1308.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *R. S.*, ll. 5232 ff. (see *Sources*, p. 312), with *F. L.*, ll. 137, 183 ff., 196, 295, 302–3, 326.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to *T. G.*, p. cxvi, note; and note on *Night*, II, l. 2.

<sup>4</sup> See also *M. P.*, p. 46; *T. G.*, p. 12; *F. C.*, ll. 120–21; *Night*, II, ll. 33 ff.; *R. S.*, ll. 6112, etc.; *Thebes*, p. 581.

<sup>5</sup> Already referred to, p. 377 above, note 2.

wears in *R. S.* a dazzling white robe 'ryche of stonys and tresour,' and a golden crown 'ful of grete pereles whyte.'<sup>1</sup> The white clothing of the adherents of the Leaf seems to have been suggested by the leadership of Diana and by the common use of white as the color of purity. That this use was familiar to Lydgate is shown by passages in *Pur le Roy* that I have cited elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> The use of green for the costumes of the adherents of the Flower is in harmony with the specific meaning of inconstancy given that color by Lydgate in *Falls of Princes*.<sup>3</sup> The chaplets of flowers worn by the company of the Flower accord with the conventional association of such chaplets with the festivities of light love; as also in *R. S.* (ll. 1572-74), where Venus wears a crown of roses.

The details in *F. L.* as to the jousting of the knights of the Leaf are paralleled in Lydgate's *Thebes*. In the account of a combat between Tideus and Polimite, we are told how "they ronne togider on horse-backe" and "Either on other first his spere brake."<sup>4</sup> And in describing the kings and princes that came to help Adrastus in Thebes, Lydgate assures us:

That as I trow, sith the world began  
There was not seene so many a manly man,  
So wel horsed with spere and with shield.<sup>5</sup>

The cult of the daisy, the object of worship of the Order of the Flower, must of course have been well known to Lydgate. He mentions this flower frequently, usually with an allusion to Chaucer's choice of it as Alcestis' flower.<sup>6</sup> In one such passage, in the *Poem against Self-Love*, there is a possible allusion to *F. L.*:

Alcestis flower, with white, with red and greene,  
Displaieth hir crown geyn Phebus bemys brihte,  
*In stormys dreepithe—*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *F. L.*, ll. 141, 148, 172.

<sup>2</sup> *Sources*, pp. 143-44.

<sup>3</sup> See *Sources*, p. 147; also *A. G.*, ll. 320 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Thebes*, p. 581; cf. *F. L.*, ll. 280, 284.

<sup>5</sup> *Thebes*, p. 591; cf. *F. L.*, ll. 124-26, 198.

<sup>6</sup> See *T. G.*, l. 74 (and Schick's note thereon); *M. P.*, pp. 23, 161; *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, xxii, l. 22.

the italicized words describing exactly the state of the Flower and its followers after the storm.

This brings us to the allegory of *F. L.*, with which Lydgate is notably in harmony. The white-robed adherents of the Leaf, unaffected by the heat and the storm that annoy the company of the Flower, are people who have been chaste, brave, and steadfast in love; the green-robed adherents of the Flower, whom the sun's heat burns and the rain bedraggles, are people who have cared for nothing but hunting and hawking and playing in meads. In other words, those who take the Leaf as their emblem are characterized by 'during qualities' such as laurel and woodbine and hawthorn leaves possess; those who serve the Flower have the instability of the flower.

Lydgate often mentions the enduring nature of certain kinds of leaves and the transitory nature of flowers. Most of his references I have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> but I shall add a few striking lines from the *Testament*:

Lych as in Ver men gretly them delite  
 To beholde the bewté sovereyne  
 Of thes blomys, som blew, rede, and white,  
 To whos fresshnesse no colour may atteyne,  
 But than unwarly comyth a wynd sodeyne,  
 For no favour list nat for to spare  
 Fresshnesse of braunchys, for to make hem bare.  
 . . . . .  
 Whan Ver is fresshest of blomys and of flourys,  
 An unwar storm his fresshnesse may apayre.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the nightingale, singing in the laurel tree, as the bird of the Leaf, is notably in harmony with the exalted character Lydgate gives this bird. In *Night. II* the poet thinks the bird is asking Venus to take vengeance

On false lovers whiche that bien vntriewe. (l. 17)

The bird in *C. B.* (not specifically the nightingale, however) sings from a laurel tree. The nightingale sings from a laurel

<sup>1</sup> *Sources*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *M. P.*, pp. 245-46.

tree in *Night*. I (l. 63), and from a hawthorn in *Night*. II (l. 356).

The allegorical conflict in *F. L.* is essentially between two views of life—a serious view and a frivolous view. It somewhat resembles the conflict between Reason and Sensuality in Lydgate's *R. S.*, and still more the rivalry of Venus and Diana in the same poem.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere else have I found so important a contrast of the two views of life presented in *F. L.* Reproof of idleness, like that of the followers of the Flower, is frequently found in Lydgate's work.<sup>2</sup> Especially worthy of quotation is the description of the author's first pawn in *R. S.* It—

Was y-callyd ydelnesse ;                    (l. 6936)  
In whos shelde men myghte se  
Ful depe y-grave a drye tre  
Without(e) lefe, fruyt, or flours,  
Lych as yt hadde be wyth shours  
Be made naked and bareyn,  
To signyfien in certeyn  
That ydelnesse, to declare,  
In vertu maketh a man ful bare.

Finally, as to detailed resemblances of *F. L.* to Lydgate's work in subject matter, the concluding stanza is in an apologetic vein such as is found in almost every one of Lydgate's poems of any length. Chaucer, it is true, apologized half humorously at times ; but Lydgate always seems to be serious, and his apologies are much more frequent and abject than Chaucer's. Furthermore, Lydgate repeats substantially the same apology over and over again, with almost the precise expressions that are found in *F. L.*<sup>3</sup> The apostrophe, 'O litel book,' is particu-

<sup>1</sup> See *Sources*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> See *M. P.*, pp. 68, 84 ff., 219, 254 ff. ; *R. S.*, ll. 463, 1076 ; *Isopus* II, ll. 118, 124.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *F. L.* 589, with *B. K.* 170 ; *F. L.* 590, with *Pil.* 162-63, and with *M. P.*, pp. 5, 48 :

Wherfore I pray to alle that schalle it reede,  
Under support of your pacyence.

The last line occurs also in *Thebes*, p. 572.

larly characteristic of Lydgate; as Professor Schick points out, even the *Falls of Princes*, with its 36,000 lines, is a 'litle booke.'<sup>1</sup> Often Lydgate apologizes for his 'unconning,' or his rudeness.<sup>2</sup> The expression 'put thyself in press' he frequently uses.<sup>3</sup> On the whole I have seen nothing more 'Lydgatian' than the last stanza of *F. L.*

It is not contended that the foregoing detailed resemblances between *The Flower and the Leaf* and the work of Lydgate prove that he was the author of our poem. Purely internal evidence can seldom be conclusive in such a matter. Indeed, any one resemblance taken by itself is usually of very slight value. It is mainly the cumulative effect of a great number of similarities in different kinds of details that I rely upon. It may be urged that the resemblances found in subject matter and phrasing are conclusive of no more than intimate knowledge of Lydgate and close imitation of him. Yet I doubt if ever an imitator succeeded in resembling his original in so many different ways at once as are pointed out above. The metrical evidence is especially valuable on this point. A poet may succeed in imitating another in matter and diction, the more obvious and easy subjects of imitation; and yet go decidedly astray in versification. Lydgate himself, in his early days, wrote some excellent imitations of Chaucer, almost every idea and phrase of which may be paralleled in his master; but his metre is not like Chaucer's. *The Flower and the Leaf*, however, is like the known work of Lydgate in versification, in subject

<sup>1</sup> See Schick's note on *T. G.*, l. 1393. Cf. also *T. G.*, l. 1380; *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. 407; *Night. I.*, l. 1; *M. P.*, pp. 45, 48, 49, 149, 163, 175, 259.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *F. L.* 591, with *B. K.* 607, *F. C.* 104, *T. G.* 951; *Night. I.*, 112, 177; and the passage from the *Troy Book*, cited in Schick's note on *T. G.* 947. Cf. *F. L.* 595, with *Pil.* 169, 182; *F. C.* 268; *M. P.*, pp. 22, 48, 193; *Isopus I.*, Prologue l. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Eleanor P. Hammond tells me of seven examples in the first two books of the *Falls of Princes*. Cf. *F. L.*, 592, with *Secrees* 555, 611; Lydgate's *Edmund and Fremund III.*, l. 1075; *A. G.* 256, 1755; *T. G.* 533, 545, 547; *M. P.*, pp. 103, 150; *Thebes*, pp. 589, 599.

matter, and in style. It is more like Lydgate at his best as an imitator of Chaucer, than it is like any other known work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and I have seen no other poem, not by Lydgate, which presents so many and such striking resemblances to Lydgate's early work.

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